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PRELIMINARY REPORT ON 1953 COTTON PRODUCTION IN COMMUNIST CHINA

[Comment: According to a speech by Chou En-lai to the Chinese People's Consultative Conference on 4 February (1), and to the 1953 budget report by Po I-po to the Central People's Government Council on 12 February (2), the 1953 production of raw cotton in Communist China was to exceed the 1952 production by 16 percent. This increase was to be gained by maintaining the cotton area at the 1952 level and by increasing the output per unit of area.]

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This report gives information on the progress made in achieving that 16 percent increase, as reported in various periodicals and mainland newspapers from January through September 1953, and Hong Kong newspapers from September to early November 1953. The production data is incomplete since the final statistics are not yet available. For certain provinces no information could be found.

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

A report on 1953 cotton production in Communist China, published 4 November 1953, stated that according to preliminary estimates, "the average production per unit of area has increased, but because the cotton acreage has been reduced, the total 1953 yields will be about 96 percent of the 1952 production." (3) Several factors, both favorable and unfavorable, affected 1953 cotton production. They included the following:

Favorable Factors

In the Communist press and periodicals, claims were made that greater and better yields per unit of area were obtained by the adoption and application of advanced Soviet techniques. These techniques were close planting, deep plowing,

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seed soaking, seed disinfection, use of early ripening Soviet seeds, the increased application of fertilizer of all types, and more frequent and timely weeding and hoeing.(4) More effective methods of controlling insects and fighting plant diseases were also claimed to provide assurances of abundant harvests.(5)

Unfavorable Factors

Poor weather seems to have had an adverse effect on cotton crops. A communication, in the 10 September Peiping Jen-min Jih-pao, from the Ministry of Agriculture to all areas called for the "protection of the cotton harvest" and further stated that "during July and August, Hopeh, Honan, Shantung, and the Northeast had continuous and heavy rains. Cotton stalks grew too rapidly and there was a great amount of fallen bolls and boll rot. There was a reduction in cotton yields and ripening was delayed. The main cotton-producing regions of Shantung and portions of Hopeh suffered serious floods, and drought conditions prevailed in the Kuan-chung area of Shensi. As a result, cotton fields throughout the nation encountered difficulties in fulfilling their production plans per unit of area. In addition, the cotton acreage was 6 million mou less than the originally planned figure. As compared to 1952, production will be greatly reduced, and this will inevitably affect the supply of cotton for the textile mills."(6) According to a report of 22 May, high winds of considerable force were reported in the provinces of Kansu, Shensi, Shansi, Honan, Hupeh, and Szechwan.(7)

Insect pests also affected 1953 cotton yields. In May, the Ministry of Agriculture issued a notice urging that insect extermination be carried out more effectively and named the cotton aphids and red spiders as being the most harmful.(8) According to a summary report of an anti-insect and plant disease conference, "Cotton aphids in Shantung alone damaged more than 6,400,000 mou of cotton. Red spiders have infested 180 hsien in 20 provinces and have caused great damage everywhere. In the Central-South Administrative Area, 1,880,000 mou of cotton were severely damaged. In the Seventh Ch'u of P'eng-tse Hsien, Kiangsi, over 400,000 catties of cottonseed were needed to replace losses caused by red spiders. With the exception of a few new cotton districts, pink boll weevils have generally infested and harmed many cotton regions. In portions of Honan boll damage was as high as 80 percent. In Yu-yao Hsien, Chekiang, cotton boll damage was 93 percent; the average damage to cotton in Chekiang was 37 percent." The report further stated that the southern cotton regions were experiencing a longer period of infestation than in 1952, and that the damage was generally heavier.(5) June figures on Shensi showed that insects also infested the following hsien: Li-ch'uan, Hsien-yang, Ta-li, Fa-yin, the latter having more than 2,300 mou infested (9); Huang-ling having 1,070 out of 2,700 mou infested, and San-yuan having 90 percent of over 3,000 mou infested.(10) Plant diseases were prevalent in some provinces. According to a May report, in Shansi Province the damaged area due to plant disease was over 500,000 mou; in the Kuan-chung region of Shensi, 14 hsien had a total diseased area of more than 1,200,000 mou of cotton.(5)

The cotton growing provinces, together with pertinent data for their respective regional areas, are as follows:

Northeast China

No production figures for the individual provinces in this region, Liaotung, Liaosi, Heilungkiang, and Jehol, were found. However, a March report from the Agricultural Bureau of the Northeast Executive Committee urged better organization and planning in cotton planting work, complained that the 1953 "cotton planting spirit is not high enough," stated that because of calamities there may be a "bad harvest," and listed Kai-p'ing Hsien, Liaotung; Sui-chung and

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Hsing-ch'eng hsiens, Liaosi, as being able to complete only 80 percent of their planting programs.(11) A November report stated that cotton production per unit of area has increased in the Northeast, but that because the area under cultivation had been reduced, total yields were approximately 35.7 less than those of 1952.(3)

North China

1. Hopeh

According to a 14 August release, Hopeh was expected to have a 3.9 increase in cotton yields.(12) However, a 4 November report stated the 1953 yields were lower than those of 1952.(3)

There was a greater use of fertilizer in Hopeh; increases ranged from 500 to 1,500 catties per mou. It was reported on 1 June that up to 15 May, 443 million catties of bean cake, cotton seed cake and other fertilizers had already been distributed.(13)

Feng-nan Hsien, T'ang-shan Special Administrative District, is said to be the main cotton-producing region of that district. No 1953 statistics were given for this hsien, but 1952 figures may give some indication of this year's yields. In 1952, the hsien planted 135,000 mou of cotton with each mou yielding about 200 catties. This total of 27 million catties was 60 percent of the district's total 1952 output.(14)

2. Shansi

No production figures were found for Shansi, however a November report said that production per unit of area had increased despite a reduction in the area under cultivation. The total yields were expected to be comparable to those of 1952.(3)

During May a cold spell hit portions of Shansi. In the Chang-i Ts'un area, there were 789 mou of cotton; of this amount 639 mou were damaged by the cold.(15)

A June report stated that a greater amount of fertilizer was being used in Shansi. Original plans called for a distribution of 100,000 catties of calcium-phosphate fertilizer in 1953 but this amount was exceeded by 41 percent.(16)

3. Pingyuan

No production figures could be found for Pingyuan.

Northwest China

1. Sinkiang

Sinkiang Province had 650,000 mou of cotton under cultivation with an average of 3,000-4,000 stalks per mou. According to September estimates, yields will average over 100 catties of unginned cotton per mou; the highest yields may reach 300-400 catties per mou. Good cotton crops were reported in T'u-lu-fan, K'u-ch'e, and K'u-erh-lo hsiens. A mutual aid team in T'u-lu-fan planted 43 mou of cotton which yielded an average of 300 catties of unginned cotton per mou; 10 mou of high production land yielded 600 catties of unginned cotton per mou.(17) In August, the areas of Ya-erh-hu Hsiang and Ta-ch'iao Ts'un were said to have 1,400 mou of close-planted cotton with 3,500 stalks per mou.(18) According to

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an October report; People's Liberation Army troops had planted 58,000 mou of cotton which was expected to yield 3,700,000 catties of ginned cotton.(19) In April 1953, the Pa-i State Farm planted its first cotton crop of more than 1,100 mou.(20)

It was reported on 11 June that more than 20 percent of Sinkiang's cotton land was planted to fine fiber cotton. K'u-ch'e Hsien's 40,000 mou were all planted with Soviet "Ssu 3173" seed. T'u-lu-fan planted 80 percent of its 20,000 mou with Schneider seed.(21) K'u-erh-lo Hsien planted "3173" seed on more than 90 percent of its land; according to a May report, 12,351 mou of land in this hsien were seeded with "3173."(22)

2. Shensi

No statistics on yields for Shensi could be found, but a November report stated that output per unit of area had increased 22.5 percent and that total yields were 18.9 percent higher than 1952.(3)

3. Kansu and Ningsia

No production data for either province could be found.

Central-South China

1. Honan

Honan Province had 10 million mou of cotton which was almost one half of the total cotton acreage in the Central-South area. Crops were generally good, according to a September report, and "if it were not for the summer's heavy rains, and the great amount of fallen bolls, 1953 cotton production would have greatly surpassed 1952 production."(23) A later report in November listed Honan as having a 4 percent increase over 1952 yields.(3)

According to an August report, the condition of cotton crops was good in the special administrative districts of Lo-yang, Hsin-hsiang, An-yang, Nan-yang, and Shang-ch'in where cotton fields were planted with 2,500-3,000 stalks per mou.(18) A 24 September release stated that Ling-pao Hsien farmers planted 280,000 mou of cotton and had a 320,000 catty increase in output; yields were expected to reach 13 million catties.(24) Ku-yung Chen had 45,000 mou out of a total of 105,000 mou of arable land planted to cotton in 1953 according to a May report.(25) A June report said that there was wider application of fertilizer in Hsin-hsiang Special Administrative District where 100 percent of the cotton land was fertilized, as compared to only 10 percent in 1952.(16)

2. Hupeh

There were 8,400,000 mou of cotton under cultivation in Hupeh, and according to crop conditions of late August, the Han-ch'uan cotton belt was expected to yield 30-40 percent increases over 1952. In general, all areas were anticipating at least 10 percent increases in yields.(26) Good August crops were also reported in the Ching-chou Special Administrative District and along the southern portion of the Peiping-Hankow Railway.(18) A Hong Kong report of 22 October said that in the Huang-kang, Hsi-shui, Hsin-chou, Ch'i-ch'un, and Sung-fou areas, 40 percent of the yield was fine fiber "Tai-tzu" cotton.(27) A 4 November report listed Hupeh as having an approximate 20 percent increase in 1953 yields.(3)

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3. Kiangsi

In September, crops were reported flourishing in the northern areas of Kiangsi.(23) Later, November figures stated that because the cotton acreage had been reduced in Kiangsi yields were lower than those of 1952.(3)

4. Hunan

According to a November report, yields in Hunan were lower than in 1952 because of smaller cotton acreage.(3)

5. Kwangsi

A November report stated that 1953 yields in Kwangsi will approximate the 1952 output.(3)

6. Kwangtung

No production figures were found for Kwangtung. A 22 August release stated that Central-South China had 20,900,000 mou of cotton, and many of the areas within this region used Soviet, early ripening seeds "3132," "I-shu-hung," "Tai-tzu," "Ssu-tzu," "Te-tzu," and "Ssu-tzu-erh-pi." Cotton fields were close planted with an average of 2,800 stalks per mou, an increase of 300 per mou over 1952.(18)

According to an October report, cotton harvest in the Central-South commenced in August, and supply and marketing cooperatives had already supplied over 423,000 piculs of new cotton to the textile mills throughout the nation. In addition to shipping 327,500 piculs of cotton to various areas in the Central-South, East China Northeast, and Southwest, 91,000 piculs were sent to the mills of Wuhan, Shanghai, and Canton.(27)

East China

An August report said that East China had about 22 million mou of cotton and that, in general, excepting those areas afflicted with natural calamities, yields were expected to be good.(18)

1. Kiangsu

According to an October report in Kiangsu there were 9 million mou of cotton fields, 6 million of which were planted with improved cotton seeds. The improved and unimproved seed lands of the Su-chow Special Administrative District yielded 37 catties of ginned cotton per mou, approximately a 12 percent increase over 1952. The improved seed land in Nan-t'ung Hsien yielded 43-50 catties of ginned cotton per mou, and unimproved seed land 30-35 catties per mou which was a more than 20 percent increase over 1952. T'ung-shan Hsien had 110,000 mou of cotton and showed a 30 percent increase in yields. San-yu Ch'u in Nan-t'ung Hsien had a high production figure of 200 catties of ginned cotton per mou. According to preliminary estimates, a more than 10 percent increase in yields was expected.(28) The latest November figures showed that Kiangsu had an approximate 10 percent increase over 1952.(3)

An August report said that Chia-ting and Pao-shan hsien had a total of 430,000 mou of cotton with yields expected to average about 20 percent more than 1952. The best yields would average over 200 catties of unginned cotton per mou.(18) It was reported in June that She-yang Hsien had 500,000 mou of cotton on which 10 percent more fertilizer was used in 1953 than in 1952.(16)

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2. Shantung

A release of 20 January stated that no production figures for Shantung were found. Ts'ang-shan Hsien had over 400 mou of cotton ruined because of faulty planting.(29) In the Te-chou Special Administrative District, 70 percent of the farmers were using "Ssu-tzu-wu-ai" and "Ssu-tzu-erh-pi" seeds according to a June report.(16) According to a November release, cotton yields had decreased in Shantung.(3)

3. Anhwei

Production of cotton in Anhwei, according to a November report, was decreased by 17.7 percent because of calamities.(3)

4. Chekiang

A November release from Hong Kong said that cotton yields may show a more than 5 percent increase over 1952.(3)

5. Fukien

No production figures for Fukien were found.

Southwest China

1. Szechwan

According to a 21 July report from Chungking, Szechwan had 3,600,000 mou of cotton under cultivation.(30) No production figures could be found, however a November report stated that Szechwan will have a more than 5 percent increase in yields over 1952.(3)

2. Kweichow

Yields will approximate those of 1952 according to a November report.(3)

3. Yunnan

A November release stated that yields will approximate those of 1952.(3)

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